

ing the commissions. I entered into a treaty with a house in Hamburg, which I authorized, in spite of the Berlin decree, *to bring cloth and leather from England*. Thus I procured these articles in a sure and cheap way. Our troops might have perished of cold had the Continental system and the absurd mass of inexecutable decrees relative to English merchandise been observed.

The Director of the Customs at Hamburg got angry, but I held firm : my cloths and my leather arrived; cloaks, coats, boots, all were promptly made, and our soldiers thus were sheltered from the severity of the season. To preserve peace with the Imperial Custom-house, I wrote to M. Collin, then Director-General, that M. Eudel having wished to put in execution the law of the 10th Brumaire an V., complaints had been made on every side. Marshal Brune asked for my opinion on this matter, and I gave it to him. I declared to M. Collin that the full execution of the decree of 31st October, 1796, was impracticable, injurious to France, and to the Hanseatic Towns, without doing harm to England. Indeed, what said article 5 of this law ? " All goods imported from foreign countries, whatever may be their origin, are to be considered as coming from English manufacturers." According to this article France was a foreign country for the Hanseatic Towns, and none of the objects enumerated in this article ought to enter Hamburg ! But the town received from France a large quantity of fine cloths, buttons, ironmongery, toys, china; and from France only clocks, bronzes, jewelry, ribbons, bonnets, gauzes, and gloves. " Let," said I to M. Eudel, " the Paris Douane be asked what that town alone exports in matters of this sort, and it will be seen how important it is not to stop a trade all the more profitable to France, as the workmanship forms the greatest part of the price of the goods which make up this trade. What would happen if the importation of these goods were absolutely prohibited in Hamburg ? The consignments would cease, and one of the most productive sources of trade for France, and especially for Paris, would be cut off.

At this time neither Hamburg nor its territory had any